

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-13 were examined on their merits, and are all the claims presently pending in the application.

1. Claims 1-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Provino (U.S. Patent No. 6,557,037). Applicants respectfully traverse the § 102(e) rejection of claims 1-13 for at least the reasons discussed below.

Provino fails to teach or suggest at least a method of sending messages between a user and a communication device over a logical channel between a network access server and a communication device, wherein the logical channel has, as a logical channel identifier, the identifier of a host VPN to which the user is currently connected, as recited in claim 1. There is no teaching or suggestion in Provino of a user connecting to another communications device that is outside of a VPN (to which the user is already connected) and using an identifier of the connected-to VPN as a logical channel identifier to facilitate sending messages to and receiving messages from the communications device. The portion of Provino cited by the Patent Office (col. 9, lines 46-60) as allegedly disclosing the use of a connected-to VPN identifier for a logical channel is directed to the establishment of a secure tunnel between a device and a firewall. There is no disclosure in the cited passage, however, of using an identifier of an already connected-to VPN for establishing communications with another device through a logical channel, wherein the identifier of the already connected-to VPN is used as the logical channel identifier. The Patent Office must point out where, in Provino, there is any teaching or

suggestion of a logical channel that has, as a logical channel identifier, an identifier associated with an established VPN connection. In addition, packets traversing the secure tunnel connection described in Provino are sent to a “predetermined integer Internet address associated with the firewall 30 which is reserved for secure tunnel establishment requests.” *See* col. 9, lines 52-54 of Provino. There is no reference in Provino that the predetermined integer address is somehow related to an identifier of an already connected-to VPN network, or that the secure tunnel is correlated to or refers to an identifier of an already connected-to VPN network. Previously, the Patent Office mischaracterized Provino at col. 10, lines 7-12 by claiming that the cited passage discloses that the secure tunnel uses an identifier of the already connected-to VPN as a tunnel identifier. The cited passage refers to the storage of an identification of the firewall and identifications of encryption and decryption algorithms and associated keys. There is no reference to an identifier of the already connected-to VPN.

Based on at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 1 is in condition for allowance over Provino, and further submit that claims 2-7 are allowable as well, at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 1. Applicants respectfully request that the Patent Office reconsider and withdraw the § 102(e) rejection of claims 1-7.

With respect to independent claims 8, 9, 10 and 12, Applicants submit that claims 8, 9 10 and 12 are in condition for allowance over Provino for at least reasons analogous to those discussed above with respect to claim 1. Applicants also submit that claims 11 and 13 are allowable as well, at least by virtue of their dependency from claims 10 and 12, respectively.

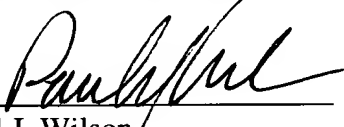
AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111  
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Applicants respectfully request that the Patent Office reconsider and withdraw the § 102(e) rejection of claims 8-13.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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